



16590  
6 December 2001

From: Commandant  
To: Distribution

Subj: **IMPROVING BRIDGE PERMITTING COORDINATION WITH THE FEDERAL  
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION**

Ref: (a) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Survey on Coordinating with U. S. Coast  
Guard on Bridge Permits  
(b) Enclosure (1), COMDTINST M16590.5B, BA Manual  
(c) Enclosure (5), COMDTINST M16590.5B, BA Manual  
(d) Enclosure (2), COMDTINST M16590.5B, BA Manual

1. The reference (a) survey of last summer is part of the Coast Guard's and the FHWA's ongoing effort to promote environmental streamlining, coordination and the project development process. This follow-up summarizes the major survey results, and advises of the process improvements and clarifications we have worked out in subsequent meetings with our FHWA partners, in response to the concerns identified in the survey responses.

2. In general, FHWA and Coast Guard field personnel responded that the quality of working relationships between the FHWA and Coast Guard were in the good to excellent range. However, with one exception, State Department of Transportation responses generally indicated poor to fair working relations with the Coast Guard. Additional comments received showed a need for clarification with regard to:


- a. Responsibilities involving 23 U.S.C. 144(h).
- b. Level of environmental documentation for historic bridge replacement projects.
- c. Coast Guard early involvement with the project development process and joint public hearings and notices.
- d. Acceptance of FHWA Categorical Exclusions involving Programmatic Section 4(f) Statements.

3. No changes in the basic Bridge Administration Program policy or coordination concepts and responsibilities contained in references (b) and (c) were determined necessary at this time. However, some clarification in procedures is warranted and we focused on doing this by revising

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reference (d), copy enclosed, to clarify the procedures between agencies for handling projects which require a Coast Guard bridge permit. Upon receipt of this letter substitute Enclosure (1) with the version presently contained in the Bridge Administration Manual (BAM). A future Change 2 to the BAM will formally replace BAM Enclosure (2).

4. If you have any questions on this effort to improve bridge permitting coordination with our FHWA/State partners, please do not hesitate to contact me.

  
N.E. MPRAS  
By direction

Encl: (1) BAM Enclosure (2), revised

Dist: All District Bridge Staffs  
FHWA - F. Skaer